

# **THE EMPLOYMENT (NORTHERN IRELAND) ORDER 2003**

**S.I. 2003 No. 2902 (N.I. 15)**

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## **EXPLANATORY MEMORANDUM**

### **POLICY OBJECTIVES**

4. The Order contains provisions designed to encourage the early resolution of disputes that occur at work and to promote the use of conciliation, facilitated by the Labour Relations Agency (“LRA”), where employers and employees fail to reach a settlement. The Order also proposes changes to the tribunal system designed to simplify and speed up some cases. Further measures aim to encourage those with an employment complaint to attempt to resolve it first, where possible, by means of in-house procedures, so that tribunals can be free to deal with cases that cannot easily be resolved. Provision is also made for a questionnaire procedure where an equal pay claim is made at work. While employers would not legally be required to respond to a questionnaire, a tribunal will be able to draw inference from a failure to do so. The Order grants to trade union learning representatives, where the union is recognised for collective bargaining purposes, paid time off during working hours to carry out trade union learning activities. Finally, the Order also empowers the Certification Officer for Northern Ireland to appoint assistants to whom functions may be delegated.